

P 031119Z JUL 97
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8276
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMCONSUL KARACHI

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 005640

DEPT FOR S/CT
DEPT ALSO FOR SA/RA

E.O. 12958: DECL: (1.6X1)
TAGS: [KPRP](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [PK](#)
SUBJ: JAMMU AND KASHMIR ISLAMIC FRONT (C-NA7-00565)

REF: STATE 106548

CLASSIFIED BY ACTING POLCOUNS MIKE ANDERSON. REASON: 1.5 (C).

1. (S) EMBASSY IS WORKING ON GATHERING MORE INFORMATION ON THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR ISLAMIC FRONT (JKIF) IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, BUT OFFERS THE FOLLOWING INITIAL READOUT TO ASSIST ANALYSTS. ACCORDING TO MUSHTAQ WANI -- ALL PARTIES HURRIYAT CONFERENCE MEMBER AND KASHMIRI MILITANT LEADER -- THE JKIF WAS FORMED WHEN THE PRO-PAKISTAN IKHEWAN-UL-MUSLIMEEN GROUP SPLIT APART IN 1995. WANI SAID THAT THE GROUP IS SMALL -- "LESS THAN 100 MEMBERS" -- BUT THAT IT IS QUITE ACTIVE IN INDIA. TWO OF ITS MORE PROMINENT MEMBERS RECENTLY WERE ARRESTED IN NEPAL AND INDIA FOR POSSESSION OF THE EXPLOSIVE RDX, WANI SAID. ASKED IF THE WORD "ISLAMIC" IN JKIF MEANT THE GROUP WAS ESPECIALLY RELIGIOUS, WANI REPLIED NO. WANI SAID MOST OF THE MEMBERS WERE "UNEDUCATED MEN" WHO CAME FROM KASHMIR.

2. (S) THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS GLEANED FROM A 1996 REPORT HANDED TO POLOFF BY FIRST SECRETARY ROWAN LAXON (PROTECT) AT THE UK HIGH COMMISSION IN ISLAMABAD. ANALYSTS MAY ALREADY HAVE THIS PARTICULAR REPORT, BUT WE OFFER IT HERE FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH:
BEGIN TEXT:

" ACCORDING TO A J&K GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN, HILAL AHMED BEG, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE J&K ISLAMIC FRONT, WAS KILLED IN AN ENCOUNTER WITH J&K POLICE IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF SRINAGAR AROUND MIDNIGHT ON 16/17 JULY 1996. BEG IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A NUMBER OF SERIOUS TERRORIST ACTS COMMITTED AT THE START OF THE MILITANCY IN KASHMIR, INCLUDING THE MURDER OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF KASHMIR UNIVERSITY. HIS DEATH FOLLOWS THAT OF SAJJAD KENU, THE FOUNDER OF THE JKIF, AND COULD LEAD TO THE DEMISE OF THE ORGANIZATION AS A SERIOUS FORCE IN THE MILITANCY." END TEXT.

3. (S) IN REPLY TO REFTEL REQUEST (PARA. L) FOR INFORMATION ON AN HUA POSTER AT ISLAMIC INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, EMBASSY CONTACTS WERE UNABLE TO LOCATE A COPY OF THE POSTER, NOR DID THEY SEE ANY OTHER ANTI-US PROPAGANDA ON DISPLAY ON CAMPUS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP OUR EYES OPEN FOR ANY SUCH LITERATURE. WE ALSO EXPECT TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ON THE JKIF -- INCLUDING PHONE NUMBERS -- WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. WE WILL PROVIDE THEM AS SOON AS WE GET THEM. REGARDS FROM I-BAD.

SIMONS